

# Child care safety checklist

## For parents and child care providers

About 31,000 children, 4 years old and younger were treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms for injuries at child care/school settings in 1997. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is aware of at least 56 children who have died in childcare settings since 1990.

In a recent national study, CPSC staff visited a number of childcare settings and found that two-thirds of them had one or more potentially serious hazards. Use the safety tips in this checklist to help keep young children safe.

### ✓ **CRIBS:**

Make sure cribs meet current national safety standards and are in good condition. Look for a

certification safety seal. Older cribs may not meet current standards. Crib slats should be no more than 2 3/8" apart, and mattresses should fit snugly.

*This can prevent strangulation and suffocation associated with older cribs and mattresses that are too small.*

### ✓ **SOFT BEDDING:**

Be sure that no pillows, soft bedding, or comforters are used when you put babies to sleep. Babies should be put to sleep on their backs in a crib with a firm, flat mattress.

*This can help reduce Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and suffocation related to soft bedding.*

### ✓ **PLAYGROUND SURFACING:**

Look for safe surfacing on outdoor playgrounds—at least 12 inches of wood chips, mulch, sand or pea gravel, or mats made of safety-tested rubber or rubber-like materials.

*This helps protect against injuries from falls, especially head injuries.*

### ✓ **SAFETY GATES:**

Be sure that safety gates are used to keep children away from potentially dangerous areas, especially stairs.

*This can help prevent against many hazards, especially falls.*

(over)

✓ **WINDOW BLIND  
AND CURTAIN  
CORDS:**

Be sure miniblinds and venetian blinds do not have looped cords. Check that vertical blinds, continuous looped blinds, and drapery cords have tension or tie-down devices to hold the cords tight.

*These safety devices can prevent strangulation in the loops of window blind and curtain cords.*

✓ **CLOTHING  
DRAWSTRINGS:**

Be sure that there are no drawstrings around the hood and neck of

children's outerwear clothing. Other types of clothing fasteners, like snaps, zippers, or hook and loop fasteners (such as Velcro), should be used.

*Drawstrings can catch on playground and other equipment and can strangle young children.*

✓ **RECALLED  
PRODUCTS:**

Check that no recalled products are being used and that a current list of recalled children's products is readily visible.

*Recalled products pose a threat of injury or death. Displaying a list of recalled*

*products would remind caretakers and parents to remove or repair potentially dangerous children's toys and products.*

For more information, or to file a complaint, contact the Bureau of Consumer Protection at:

**(800) 422-7128**

**FAX: (608) 224-4939**

**TTY: (608) 224-5058**

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